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ABSTRACT

An approach which utilizes early intervention followed by individualized programing as a preventative measure against reading failure has been successfully carried out with kindergarteners in a large, urban bilingual public school system. The program is determined by identified problem areas followed by individualized instruction based upon diagnosed weaknesses in pre-reading skill areas. Emphasis is placed on sequential and detailed practice of each step in the learning process. The close stimulus-response relationship between auditory and visual clues has been helpful to the slow learner and bilingual child. (Samples of worksheets are included.) (SBH)

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A PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF READING SKILLS IN LOW PERFORMANCE CHILDREN

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Proceedings of the First World Congress on Future Special Education for the Council for Exceptional Children at the University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland, June 25-July 1, 1978.

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Abstract

This approach to improving reading skills is based upon research in the public school system at the kindergarten level extrapolated to grade level performance. It was substantiated that children enter school with a variety of strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the program is determined by identified problem areas followed by individualized instruction based upon diagnosed weaknesses in pre-reading skill areas.

Emphasis is placed upon sequential and detailed practice of each step in the learning process. The close stimulus-response relationship between auditory and visual clues has been helpful to the slow learner and bi-lingual child. Samples of worksheets are included.

A PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF READING SKILLS IN LOW PERFORMANCE CHILDREN

by Kathleen Barrett Marko, Ph. D.

One of the important issues in education today is the increasing number of students who fail in reading. Ray H. Barsch, a specialist in learning disabilities writes that "The failing learner is no longer a statistic of minor significance-the percentage of failing students is increasing annually. In the final analysis the issue is educational. This focus must be maintained by all disciplines that come upon the scene." [1]

How is the school system utilizing its resources to attack this issue of the failing student? More and more are the results of current research pointing the way to early intervention followed by individualized programming as a preventative measure against reading failure. The following plan has been successfully carried out in a large urban, bi-lingual public school system and is offered as one way of improving reading skills.

Method and Procedures

Within the public school system chosen for the study, a climate of interest and cooperation was developed among the teachers and building principals prior to instituting individualized programing. All the kindergarten population received a diagnostic screening to isolate those with potential learning difficulties.

Any standard battery of reading tests may be used to suit the community. This study used IQ, an original Kindergarten Screening Test[2] and the Slingerland Pre-Reading Procedures.[3]

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The Slingerland Test consists of seven subtests with scores for each total score. The K. Test consists of twenty subtests each with dichotomous scoring as well as IQ and identification items but with no total score. (dichotomous scoring equals rawscore and scaled score).

The students who failed five or more items on the K. Test were chosen for half an hours tutoring each day for four months. Teacher's aides were used to give the individual tutoring so that the classroom teacher could maintain her daily schedule uninterrupted.

The tutoring was planned according to the expressed weaknesses of each student as shown through the pre-screening procedures. It included practice in the areas of a) Auditory skills- for the child who had an auditory discrimination deficit; b) Visual Perception- when a deficit was found in visual-motor coordination and visual discrimination; and c) Gross Motor Training- for the child with inadequate motor coordination. Auditory discrimination emphasized identification of letter-sounds and identification of the initial consonant in one syllable words. Visual perception encompassed visual-motor coordination as expressed by copying designs, copying letter and numerals, copying one syllable words, correcting reversals, and practicing eye-hand coordination as well as visual discrimination in matching designs and matching words. Gross motor training included throwing, jumping, skipping, dancing, obstacle walking and running.

Teacher made materials began at a level based upon the assumption that the student needed assistance to master every new step in the learning process.

Original, teacher made materials are presented to assist the child over each new problem. These materials represent minute steps in cognitive, auditory, visual and associational development.

The composition of the word is developed from the basic consonant-vowel-consonant concept with the vowel as a pivot. The development is in a strict left to right sequence. This sequencing aids the slow child and eliminates confusion. All tutoring was limited to the development of the following skills relevant to success in reading based upon individual profile from early diagnosis.

1) Auditory discrimination of words[4]
2) Matching words-visual discrimination[5]
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These skills were evaluated for their use and effectiveness in providing a basic groundwork from which to progress to reading success and grade level achievement.

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2. Printing letter to reinforce visual memory of its configuration.
3. Circle letter learned in group of mixed letters.
4. Circle one syllable word beginning with letter learned in a group of mixed words.
5. Give words to pictures and print initial consonant underneath picture- auditory recognition of initial sound.
6. Auditory discrimination associated with visual clue of corresponding mouth set; print letter sound.
7. Auditory discrimination of sound at beginning of word presented without visual clue of mouth set, print letter given.
8. Associate letter with beginning sound in word. Connect given letter with corresponding illustration. Say name of picture and print beginning letter-sound underneath corresponding picture.
9. Use reading charts, the Dial-a-Vowel and the Easy Decoder when the child completes the above steps correctly.

Discrimination of short and long vowels in words is aided by use of the described charts. The alphabet is printed at the top -for long vowel sounds and the vowels only are printed at the bottom-for short vowel sounds. Above the short vowel sounds word cards are inserted in slot or pocket.

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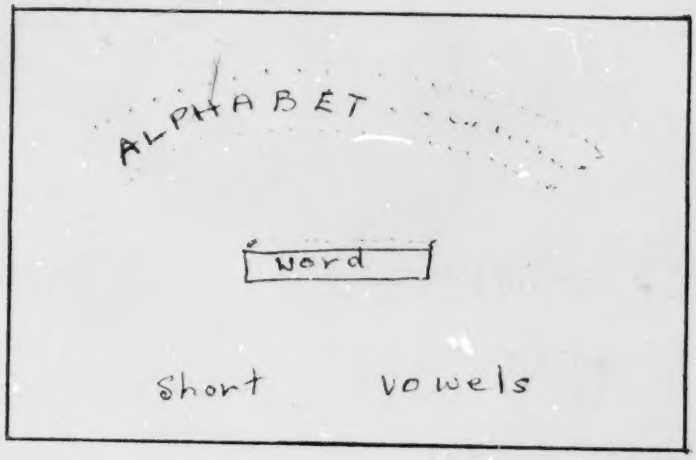
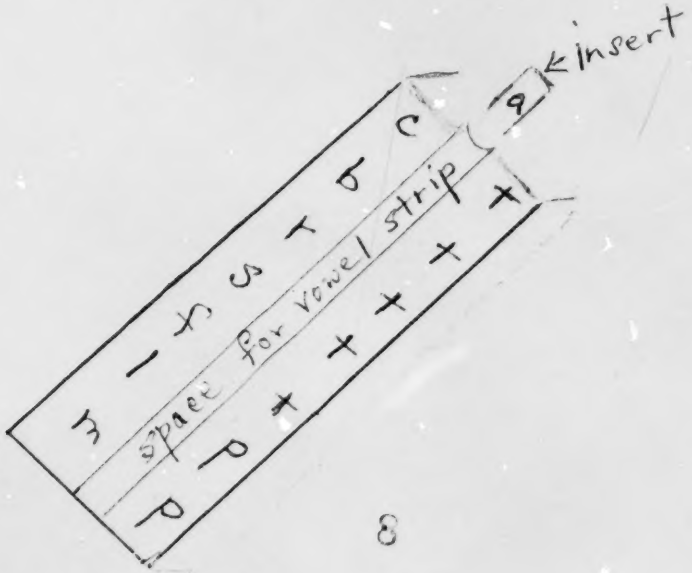


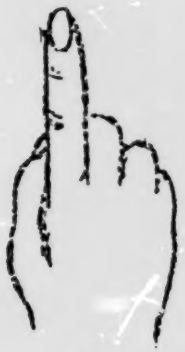
Easy Decoder

This consists of color coded vowel and consonants housed in an oak tag folder. Use only one vowel strip at a time. Use only short vowels to start with. Example, while "a" makes all the words, "i" or "e" will not, necessitating color coding.

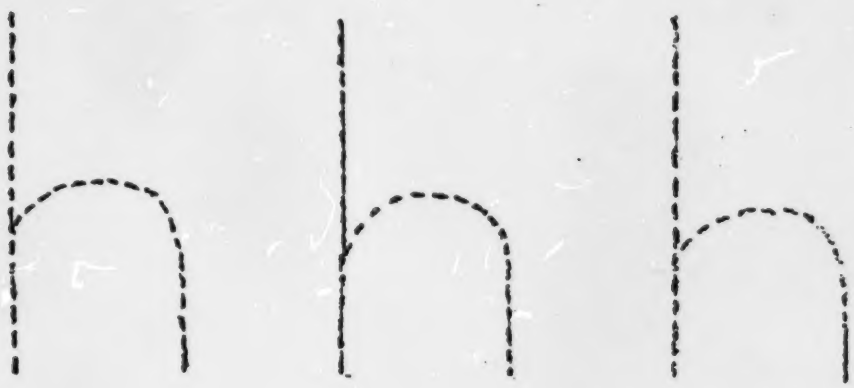


SAMPLE WORKSHEETS FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Cut out the letter on the back cover that fits over the hand

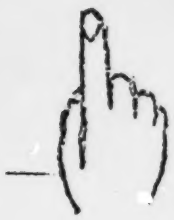


Fold up on the dotted line.
Staple sides to form pocket to store cut-out h
Practice fitting this cut-out often as you proceed with other letters.



NAME _____

Circle the letter that looks like the hand



h h h

p h h p

h h f h

NAME _____

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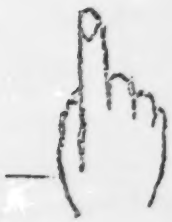

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p h h p

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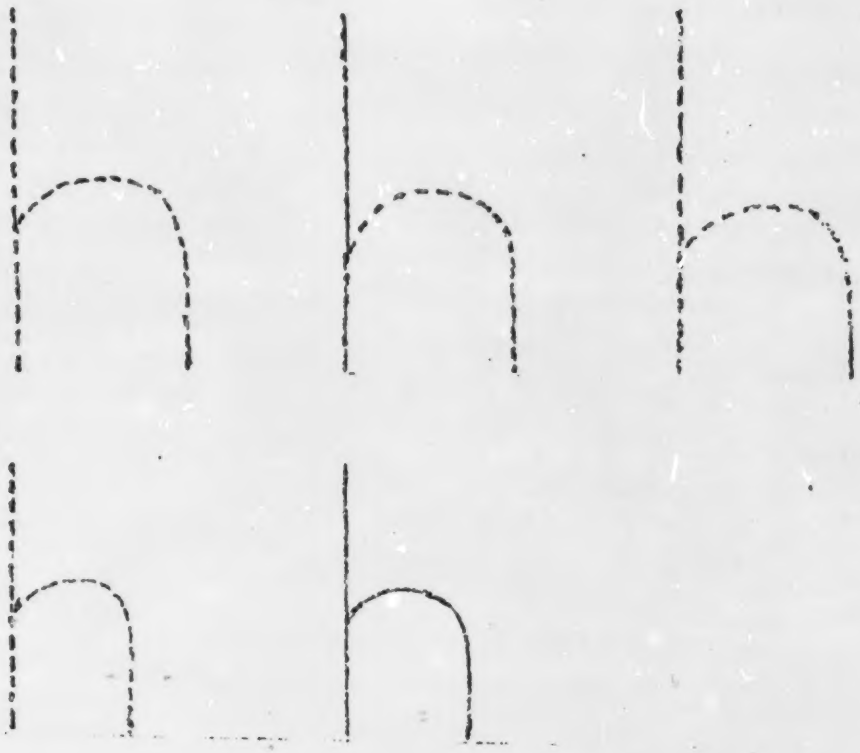

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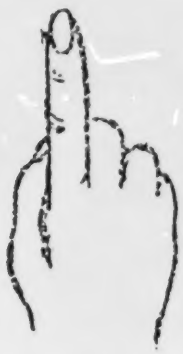

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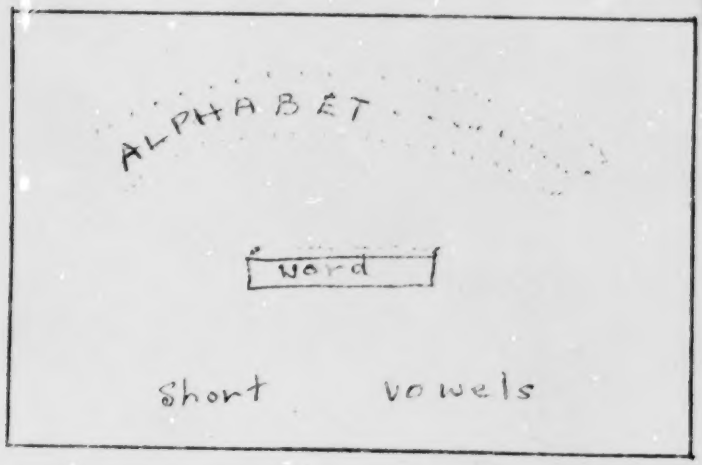

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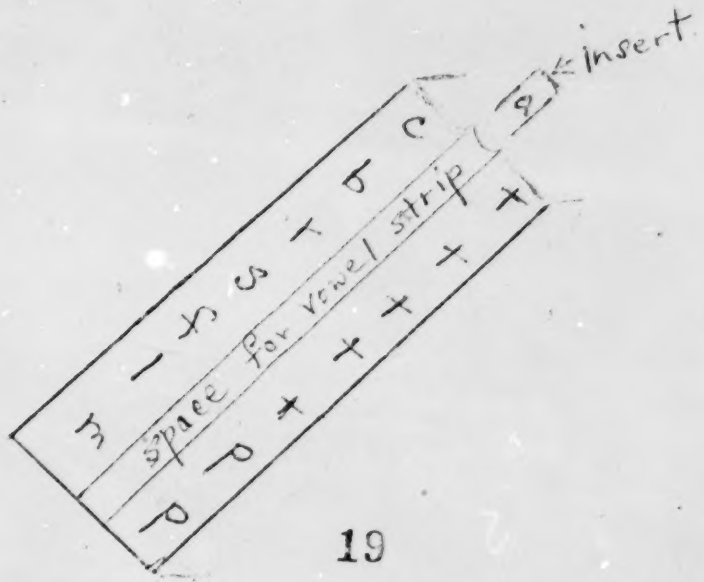

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